

2/20/2004

INTERAGENCY REGULATORY COORDINATION INITIATIVE

The Regional Executives from the US Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries ((NOAA), under the leadership of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Northwestern Division, have committed to jointly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their Regulatory processes in the Pacific Northwest Region (WA, OR & ID). Goals of this interagency initiative include improving: the effectiveness and efficiency of our processes, the timeliness of our decision-making, and the public's access

to information about specific projects under review with the agencies. Implementation is accomplished by interagency State teams established in May of 2002, under the guidance of an interagency Steering Team established at the Regional level.

Regional accomplishments & ongoing actions include:

Oregon -

- A programmatic biological opinion (PBO) for 15 categories of activities is in place
- A PBO for the Maintenance/Repair of Port facilities will be in place by March 03
- Discussion of the need for a tool to handle gravel mining activities is ongoing
- ESA consultation was initiated for a State Program General Permit in Dec 02

Washington -

- A PBO for several minor activities has been in place and a General Permit for watercraft lifts finalized.
- A Regional General Permit (RGP) is under development for the Maintenance of Commercial/Industrial Piers
- 7 additional RGPs are in various stages of development for activities such as piers in Lake Washington, the Mid-Columbia and Inland Marine Piers.

Idaho -

- A PBO for several activities is expected to be completed by Spring 2003

Region-wide:

- an interagency dispute resolution process has been established
- effective interagency teams are in place at the regional & state levels
- a tracking system has been established which allows the public to check the status of permit applications and ESA consultations over the Internet (see district websites or www.nwd.usace.army.mil/et/reg/home)
- Corps, NOAA & FWS data is available and linked in the tracking system

The agencies next quarterly meeting at the Executive level is tentatively scheduled for May, 2004.